

# **Exhibit A**

Date: September 6, 2019

The Honorable Jed S. Rakoff  
United States District Court Judge  
Southern District of New York  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Rakoff,

My name is Marie Michele Benjamin. I am writing this letter on behalf of my nephew Luidji Benjamin.

For the people who doesn't know, and think that he's a bad person, he's not. To us he's one the best things that ever happened. I won't say that he didn't do bad things but I will say he's not a leader. He was young and dumb and he did stupid things just like every teenager. And one of the reasons he resulted in this situation is because of his father. He was always trying to find his father's love and time but he's father never cared for him so he went to find these things in the streets, to what he called "Friends". I took Luidji under my wings, cared for him, gave him everything, he became my first occupation and considered a son to me. I was always there for him and he was always there for me. When I was at the hospital for a month in July 2015, he stuck right by me.

I feel guilty about everything that happened. I thought I was helping but I failed him. We're not asking for what to do with him but I beg you please, sending him away for 20 years, he won't make it. And we might die before he get out. He has his mom all the way in Haiti that is missing out on his son's life. She's gonna have to endure this pain for the rest of her life. Luidji is going for sentencing on September 13th and my birthday is on September 15th, if I had him or even have the hope to seen him by my side would mean the world to me. But the fact that everything is happening all at ones is causing more than a pain.

Again, I'm sorry for what happened if it really happened, but he's not a bad person. He always want to help and care about people. Even in prison he wants to protect people when he can't even protect himself. If I knew that all of this would be happening today, in 2014 when he went to Haiti, I would've left him there. But we're asking you please and we know nobody is above the law and he's going to serve time no matter what but think about him being a son, a father, a nephew, a brother and better yet a human being who wants to be with his family. He's a 23 year old young man with a mind of a 5 year old child. That's why he's in this situation also. Two days after his sentencing is my birthday and I'll get a gift that I will never forget for the rest of my life. And I know I'll die before he gets out and that's what will kill him the most.

We're asking please help him. Help him with his mental health because he doesn't think right. By the time he gets out, he won't have his family with him. Me being the only one who's close to him that much will die sooner because of my illnesses (Pulmonary embolism, DVT and blood clots in most parts in my body). I don't even think I'll make it to five years.

We all feel guilty because every time he brought someone to the house, we let them. Especially me, I care for them too, I thought they had problems and needed somebody. But I

should've learned more information about them. I failed my son and I feel like I'm one of the reasons he's in this situation right now.

I'm not asking for him to be released because it's impossible but I'm asking for you to reduce his sentencing. He wants to be with his family at least one last time. He wants to see his daughter grow up. I hate myself for letting him down because I didn't do enough to save him from everything, from the danger he was in and I will never forget it till the day I die. And think about his mother in Haiti who's sleeping on the floor in people's houses because her house was burned down. If Luidji was here, he would hate this act and do everything to help his mom. He's not a bad person I swear. He made mistakes and he regrets them till this day. Please just help him. Help me. Thank you and sorry.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Marie M. Benjamin

Date: September 6, 2019

The Honorable Jed S. Rakoff  
United States District Court Judge  
Southern District of New York  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Rakoff,

My name is Yollette Benjamin, sister of Luidji Benjamin, and I am writing on his behalf. I have known my brother all my life. There's nothing no one can tell me about him that I hadn't already know because we talk about everything. I am writing this letter not only because he's my brother but because he is innocent in certain situations. He is also guilty in other situations because he didn't listen to us. But my brother is not a bad person. He just went through a phase that every young teenager went through but he did not do what they said he did. I know him. My brother was always there for me no matter what. He always had time for me, to hang out, teach me new things about life till this day. He used to drop me off and pick me up from school most of the times. As I said, nobody can tell me anything about my brother. He's servicing time for something he didn't do and it's not fair to me, to him and to everyone else.

I am on my last year of high school and he will not be assisting my graduation. As I think about this situation he got himself in, I realized I might not see him for a very long time. Just because of these type of what he called "friends." They used him because he was quiet and dumb. Now he's a victim. My brother was never a leader. He was just young and dumb and got in messed up situations. I don't know what to tell you about how to handle this situation but think about him being a son, and father and a brother who will never see his daughter and his family never again.

Every time I go visit, my eyes always tear up because till this day I can't believe what is happening to him. All I'm asking please is don't send him away where we can't come visit him because that will break him. And he doesn't deserve to be in prison for 20 to 25 years. It's like that'll be his new home. He does not want that and so do we. I'm growing up and he won't be there to witness that. Every time he tell me that. And his two year old daughter is growing up so fast and he will miss that. That is not fair because he's daughter might not recognize who her father is. He's daughter might not want to see or touch him everyone deserve a family and love. Punishing him like that is not the answer. He's a good guy, he's a good father but most of all he's a good brother to me. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

*Yollette Benjamin*

August 29, 2019

Yolette Osirus  
243 Lehrer Avenue  
Elmont, NY 11003

**RE: Luidji Benjamin**

To: The Honorable Judge

I have known Luidji Benjamin as a grandson and as a friend for almost all his life. I was both troubled and surprised to hear about his recent cases as he has always been a rather solid young man. It is for this reason I am happy to write this letter as reference for Luidji Benjamin regarding this matter. I understand the seriousness of this matter, however, hope the court will show some leniency.

Luidji Benjamin has always been an upright character in the community. In our house, he has really been there for me, especially when the rest of the family is out. He made it a point to be there and show a significant amount of support during the time I really needed help. Luidji Benjamin was a source of camaraderie and comfort for me. He always willing to take me to my Doctor appointments. He has truly been a son rather than a grandson over the years.

In addition to his love, carness and friendship, he is a usually upstanding member in the family and in the neighborhood. While it is unfortunate that he has made some bad decisions, thus resulting in this case. While I was surprised to hear of the misconduct, it comes as no surprise that he is ready to accept responsibility for his actions. I believe that as we move forward, he will emerge a better person. In short, Luidji Benjamin expressed deep sense of remorse in making such serious mistake and I believe in his ability to pay his debt to the society.

It is my sincere hope the court takes this letter into consideration at the time of sentencing. Despite the current case, I still believe Luidji Benjamin to be an honorable individual, a valuable member of his family and the community, and a good human being.

Sincerely,



Yolette Osirus

Date: September 6, 2019

The Honorable Jed S. Rakoff  
United States District Court Judge  
Southern District of New York  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Rakoff,

My name is John Louis and I am writing on my first cousin Luidji Benjamin's behalf. Me and Luidji grew up together in his aunt Guerline Charles's house. He was my brother, my cousin, my only guy friend pretty much. I am terribly sorry about what happened. And I feel guilty because at a time, I wasn't there to support him to make good decisions. We were always with each other. We shared a PlayStation together to play in the house. He was my older brother/cousin that I always knew would be there for me. But turns out I failed him by not being there for him.

Luidji always had a good sense of humor and was always trying to help someone. During winter, he always took me to clean out snow for people. It was like our little winter job together. Luidji always used to stand up for me. He was that kid who doesn't like seeing people down. He has that special thing about him that make people see him as a good person. I personally do not believe in all the lies about him because I have seen both his good and bad side. It looks like he's going away for something he didn't do and that sickens me. Luidji does not deserve any of this.

He made a mistake by being in the wrong crowds which now permit him from being away from his family. For the people who doesn't know him, you can't just judge someone just because of what you heard and because the mistakes someone made when they were young. I personally feel like that's the problem. Luidji was young and dumb and he did stupid stuff just like any other teenager. Just like me also. We're not all perfect. We make new experiences, we make mistakes and we learn from these mistakes. That's my point of view from all of this. I'm asking you, please don't send him away for mistakes he did when he was young. I don't want to spend another years without seeing my homebody.

And I know this is going to affect his mom (Marie M. Benjamin) really badly because Luidji is her life. Sending him away would break her. Knowing that she's never going to see him again. She's going to feel guilty for everything that happened because she was always there when Luidji brought someone home. She felt bad for them so she accepted them in Luidji's life. She has done so much for both me and Luidji and even more for Luidji because she was like a mother and a father to him. Luidj didn't have a dad to care for him so she took him and took care of him. Now that Luidji might go away for that much time, and his mom won't see him, that is going to end her. Please understand the destruction that well be in the family. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ John Louis

August 29, 2019

Michael Lavelle

814 Dogwood Avenue

Franklin Square, New York 11010

Your Honor,

**RE: Luidji Benjamin**

I have known Luidji Benjamin for a period of 12 years, as he is the nephew of my life-long friend Marie Benjamin. During this time, I have watched him grow up, finish his schooling and look for work. When Luidji Benjamin was younger, he would stay over occasionally at my place as he was friends with my grandson. Of late, he has helped me with odd chores in the house as my health is failing and my children live out of state.

As I said, I have known Luidji Benjamin as a nice respectful young man and neighbor. I was terrified and surprised to hear about his recent case as he has continuously been a very solid young man. This is for this purpose am happy to write a character reference for Luidji Benjamin regarding this matter. I understand the seriousness of this matter, however, am confidence the court will show some clemency.

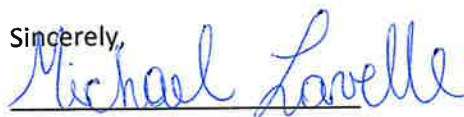
Luidji Benjamin has always been an upright character in the community. In our friendship, he has really been there for me, especially when my children left New York. He made it a point to be there and show a significant amount of support for me during a sudden and arduous health.

I am aware of the charges that Luidji Benjamin has before the court. I have had the opportunity to discuss these charges with his aunt and she said, he has expressed to her his remorse and shame. He explained to her that he intends to stop hanging out with those bad friends, he will be enrolled himself in courses to support him in this matter.

Luidji Benjamin has had complicated upbringing due to his father who has never been there for him and move away from the family. Following this separation, Luidji Benjamin had no contact with his father. I can say it with total confidence that few young men have contributed to the society in a way that Luidji Benjamin has even though his mother and his father were not there for him.

Luidji Benjamin has thus far shown a steadfast and resolute demeanor in moving past this mistake in a constructive and successful manner. In closing, I am respectfully requesting the court to grant leniency and render a decision making him eligible for probation, and it is also my hope that the court will take this letter into consideration at the time of sentencing.

Sincerely,



Michael Lavelle

Date: September 6, 2019

The Honorable Jed S. Rakoff  
United States District Court Judge  
Southern District of New York  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

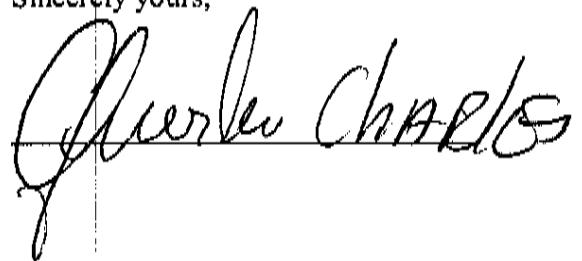
Dear Judge Rakoff,

My name is Guerline Charles, and I am writing on the behalf of my nephew Luidji Benjamin. For a period of time, Luidji lived with me and my husband. He was considered a son to me back then too. Everything he wanted he got. He is a nice young man to everyone. Everywhere he go, he get a lot of compliments on how nice he is, and he is respectful. That's what everyone love about him. When I learned about this situation he got into, I couldn't believe it because he is not that kind of person. I truly love Luidji as my own son but the fact that he is getting blamed on something that he is far from capable of doing is absurd.

Luidji is not perfect, he is just like any other teenager in America. Teens who make new experiences. Teens who don't listen to their parents. And teens who has parent issues and go find a comfort from their friends. He was that teenager who was looking for love from friends in the streets. We always tried to protect him from this kind of dangers and we wish we did more. I blame myself especially because he lived with me once.

And even when he's in prison, he is always trying to help the others. And sometimes he even ask us to send a little money to the others because they don't have a family. People don't understand how good of a kid he is. He just made some mistakes and at that time he had the mind of a little child and that's what caused him in trouble. I really wish I'm still alive when he come out because I don't want him to not have anyone and to feel like he wasted his life. I love my nephew from the heart and I am truly sorry for what he did. Thank you

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Guerline Charles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "G".



Date: September 6, 2019

The Honorable Jed S. Rakoff  
United States District Court Judge  
Southern District of New York  
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New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Rakoff,

I am Eve Monax Charles, husband of Guerline Charles. I am at lost for words since I learned about Luidji Benjamin's case. At a time, him and John was living with me and my wife. They were inseparable. Luidji always had a good heart and was respectful towards everybody. He always wanted to make sure everyone is okay and always wanted to help. He was considered a son to me. I would take him and John to the park and he would always want to look after John. He always felt like it was his job cause he was older.

Luidji's problem was the fact that he didn't find what he was looking for in his dad so went to other people to find it. Even when I was there for him, it's like I wasn't because I wasn't his father and that killed me. I wish I could've helped him more because he would've never been in this situation if he had a father figure. I am truly at loss for word because he doesn't deserve this and he just had father issues. Let him be the father he never had to his daughter. That would make up for every mistake he ever made.

Sincerely yours,

MONAX CHARLES